

LETTERS

Not what, but how

New York

Your editorial on the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (July 13) contained at least two criticisms which you may want to reconsider in the light of subsequent developments and second thought.

The editorial took the chairman of the TIRC to task for citing "the growing recognition by scientists that many aspects of human experience may be involved in the origins of our major health problems—cancer and heart disease." In contrast to your criticism of this statement, it is my understanding that many scientists would agree with it. On July 25th, subsequent to your editorial, Surgeon General Luther L. Terry announced that the U.S. Public Health Service's study on tobacco and health "will be concerned not only with tobacco but all other factors which may be involved." This certainly would appear to add validity to the TIRC statement which you attacked.

In the same editorial, PRINTERS' INK referred to the authors of a recent study implicating smoking as "conscientious . . . well-qualified . . . unbiased," while calling the recipients of TIRC research grants "hired medical hands."

Does PRINTERS' INK really believe it can divide scientists into "good" groups and "bad" groups purely on the basis of where they obtain their research funds? To the best of my knowledge, the TIRC awards its research grants on the same basis as do the U.S. Public Health Service, the American Cancer Society, etc. The grants are given with no strings attached, and the recipients, in many of America's most respected research institutions, are free to publish their work whenever, wherever and however they choose. A number of scientists have worked under grants from TIRC and government and other granting organizations simultaneously.

We are sure PRINTERS' INK would not want to present a biased or hasty viewpoint in its treatment of this important subject, particularly since the Surgeon General of the U.S. is awaiting a scientific determination on these questions.—JOHN MONSARRAT, *vice-president*, J. WALTER THOMPSON CO.

The editorial did not intend to question TIRC's right to comment on current research. It did, however, object to the snide way it was done. As for TIRC research—just one question: Did reader Monsarrat ever see a report on TIRC's findings on smoking and ducks?
—Ed.

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